United Nations A/54/574

General Assembly

Distr.: General
5 November 1999
English
Original: Spanish

Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 87

International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Rapporteur: Mr. Gualberto **Rodríguez San Martín** (Bolivia)

I. Introduction

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 17 September 1999, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its fifty-fourth session the item entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space" and to allocate it to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

2. The Fourth Committee considered the item at its 2nd and 14th to 16th meetings, on 22 September and 25, 27 and 29 October 1999, and held a general debate on the item at its 14th to 16th meetings (see A/C.4/54/SR.2 and 14-16).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;[1]

(b) Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/CONF.184/6);

(c) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (A/54/476);

(d) Letter dated 5 October 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/C.4/54/8).

4. At its 2nd meeting, on 22 September, the Committee decided to establish an open-ended Working Group on International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/54/20)

99-33140 (E) 121199

of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), to be chaired by the delegation of India, to prepare the draft resolutions on the item.

5. At the 14th meeting, on 25 October, the Chairman of the Fourth Committee made an introductory statement (see A/C.4/54/SR.14).

6. At the same meeting, the Chairman of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space introduced the report of that Committee, as well as the report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolution A/C.4/54/L.6

7. At the 16th meeting, on 29 October, the representative of India, on behalf of the Working Group, introduced a draft resolution entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space" (A/C.4/54/L.6).

8. At the same meeting, following a statement by the Chairman, the Committee agreed to waive rule 120 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and to consider draft resolution A/C.4/54/L.6, which had been circulated during the course of that meeting.

9. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.4/54/L.6 without a vote (see para. 13, draft resolution I).

B. Draft resolution A/C.4/54/L.7

10. At the 16th meeting, on 29 October, the representative of India, on behalf of the Working Group, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space" (A/C.4/54/L.7).

11. At the same meeting, following a statement by the Chairman, the Committee agreed to waive rule 120 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and to consider draft resolution A/C.4/54/L.7, which had been circulated during the course of that meeting.

12. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.4/54/L.7 without a vote (see para. 13, draft resolution II).

III. Recommendations of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

13. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I

International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 51/122 of 13 December 1996 and 53/45 of 3 December 1998,

Deeply convinced of the common interest of mankind in promoting the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived therefrom, and also of the importance of international cooperation in this field, for which the United Nations should continue to provide a focal point,

Reaffirming the importance of international cooperation in developing the rule of law, including the relevant norms of space law and their important role in international cooperation for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and of the widest possible adherence to international treaties that promote the peaceful uses of outer space,

Concerned about the possibility of an arms race in outer space,

Recognizing that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Considering that space debris is an issue of concern to all nations,

Noting the progress achieved in the further development of peaceful space exploration and applications as well as in various national and cooperative space projects, which contributes to international cooperation, and the importance of further international cooperation in this field,

Taking note with satisfaction of the successful conclusion of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held at Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999 as a special session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space open to all States Members of the United Nations,[2]

Taking into account the recommendations contained in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development", adopted by UNISPACE III,[3]

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its forty-second session,[4]

1. *Endorses* the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its forty-second session;[4]

---

[2] See A/CONF.184/6.

[3] Ibid., chap. I, resolution 1.

[4] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/54/20).

2. *Invites* States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the uses of outer space[5] to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to those treaties;

3. *Notes* that, at its thirty-eighth session, the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, in its working groups, continued its work as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/45;[6]

4. *Welcomes* the new approach taken by the Committee in composing the agenda of the Legal Subcommittee,[7] and endorses the recommendation of the Committee that the Subcommittee, at its thirty-ninth session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries:

(a) Consider the following as regular agenda items:

(i) General exchange of views;

(ii) Status of the international treaties governing the uses of outer space;

(iii) Information on the activities of international organizations relating to space law;

(iv) Matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space and to the character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union;

(b) Continue its consideration of review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space,[8] as a single issue and item for discussion;

(c) Consider the following in accordance with the work plans adopted by the Committee:[9]

(i) Review of the status of the five international legal instruments governing outer space;

(ii) Review of the concept of the "launching State";

5. *Notes* that the Legal Subcommittee at its thirty-ninth session, will submit its proposals to the Committee for new items to be considered by the Subcommittee at its fortieth session, in 2001;

6. *Notes also* that, in the context of paragraph 4 (a) (iv) above, the Legal Subcommittee will reconvene its working group to consider the item;

---

[5] Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 2222 (XXI), annex); Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 2345 (XXII), annex); Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (resolution 2777 (XXVI), annex); Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 3235 (XXIX), annex); and Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 34/68, annex).

[6] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/54/20), chap. II.C.

[7] Ibid., annex I, sect. B.

[8] See resolution 47/68.

[9] See A/AC.105/674, annex II.B, for the work plan for item (i) and *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/54/20), chap. II.C., para. 114, for the work plan for item (ii).

7. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee[10] that the Legal Subcommittee, at its thirty-ninth session, suspend consideration in its Working Group of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space pending the results of the work in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, without prejudice to the possibility of reconvening its Working Group on that item if, in the opinion of the Legal Subcommittee, sufficient progress has been made in the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-seventh session, to warrant the reconvening of the Working Group;

8. *Also endorses* the recommendations and agreements concerning the organization of work in the Legal Subcommittee;[11]

9. *Takes note* of the agreement reached by the Committee at its fortieth session on the composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the second term starting in 2000, in the context of the implementation of the measures relating to the working methods of those bodies,[12] which were endorsed by the General Assembly in paragraph 11 of its resolution 52/56 of 10 December 1997, and notes that consultations among delegations and regional groups will be held concerning the members of the bureaux for the second term with a view to reaching consensus on the matter by the thirty-seventh session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee;

10. *Agrees* that the Committee should elect its officers at the beginning of its forty-third session, in accordance with consensus agreement to be reached among the members of the Committee on the members of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the second term, as an exceptional arrangement for that session of the Committee;

11. *Notes* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, at its thirty-sixth session, continued its work as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/45;[13]

12. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-sixth session continued to consider on a priority basis the agenda item on space debris and that the Subcommittee concluded its work according to the multi-year work plan adopted by the Subcommittee at its thirty-second session;[14]

13. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the technical report on space debris[15] submitted by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee to the Committee, and agrees that the technical report should be widely distributed;

14. *Agrees* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee should assess the effectiveness of existing space debris mitigation practices and the extent to which they were being implemented and that efforts to model and characterize the debris environment should continue;

15. *Welcomes* the new approach taken by the Committee in composing the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee,[16] and endorses the recommendation of the

---

[10] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/54/20), para. 90.

[11] Ibid., paras. 109-117.

[12] Ibid., *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/52/20), annex I.

[13] Ibid., *Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/54/20), chap. II B.

[14] A/AC.105/605, para. 83.

[15] A/AC.105/720.

[16] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/54/20), annex I, sect. A.

Committee that the Subcommittee, at its thirty-seventh session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries:

(a) Consider the following items:

(i) General exchange of views and introduction to reports submitted on national activities;

(ii) The United Nations Programme on Space Applications and the coordination of space activities within the United Nations system following the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III);

(iii) Matters relating to remote sensing of the Earth by satellites, including applications for developing countries and monitoring of the Earth's environment;

(b) Consider the item on the use of nuclear power sources in outer space in accordance with the work plan adopted by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-fifth session;[17]

(c) Consider the following single issues and items for discussion:

(i) International cooperation in human spaceflight;

(ii) Presentations on new launch systems and ventures;

(iii) Space debris, on a priority basis;

(iv) Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and of its utilization and applications, including, *inter alia*, in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to developments in space communications, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries;

16. *Notes* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-seventh session will submit its proposal to the Committee for a draft provisional agenda for the thirty-eighth session of the Subcommittee, in 2001;

17. *Also notes* that the theme fixed for special attention at the thirty-seventh session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee will be "Space commercialization: an era of new opportunities" and that the Committee on Space Research and the International Astronautical Federation, in liaison with Member States, will be invited to arrange a symposium on that theme, with as wide a participation as possible, to be held during the first week of that session of the Subcommittee;

18. *Agrees* that, in the context of paragraphs 15 (a) (ii) and 16 above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-seventh session should reconvene the Working Group of the Whole to consider the future work of the Subcommittee in the light of the recommendations of UNISPACE III;

19. *Also agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 15 (b) above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-seventh session should reconvene its Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space;

20. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee[16] that, in the context of paragraph 15 (c) (iii) above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its thirty-seventh session review international application of the standards of the International Telecommunication Union and recommendations of the Inter-Agency Space Debris

[17] See A/AC.105/697, annex III, appendix.

Coordination Committee concerning the disposal of satellites in geosynchronous orbit at the end of their useful life;

21. *Also endorses* the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 2000, as proposed to the Committee by the Expert on Space Applications;[18]

22. *Notes with satisfaction* that, in accordance with paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 50/27 of 6 December 1995, the African Regional Centres for Space Science and Technology Education, in French language and in English language, were inaugurated in Morocco and Nigeria, respectively, that the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific continued its education programme in 1999 and that significant progress has been achieved in furthering the goals of the Network of Space Science and Technology Education and Research Institutions of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and establishing regional centres for space science and technology education in the other regions;

23. *Recommends* that Member States concerned in Asia and the Pacific hold further consultations, with the assistance of the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat, with a view to making the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific grow into a network of nodes;

24. *Also recommends* that more attention be paid to all aspects related to the protection and the preservation of the outer space environment, especially those potentially affecting the Earth's environment;

25. *Considers* that it is essential that Member States pay more attention to the problem of collisions of space objects, including those with nuclear power sources, with space debris, and other aspects of space debris, calls for the continuation of national research on this question, for the development of improved technology for the monitoring of space debris and for the compilation and dissemination of data on space debris, also considers that, to the extent possible, information thereon should be provided to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and agrees that international cooperation is needed to expand appropriate and affordable strategies to minimize the impact of space debris on future space missions;

26. *Urges* all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes;

27. *Emphasizes* the need to increase the benefits of space technology and its applications and to contribute to an orderly growth of space activities favourable to sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, in particular in the developing countries, and mitigation of the consequences of natural disasters;

28. *Takes note* of the interest of some developing countries, as well as other countries, in becoming members of the Committee, and requests the continued examination of the subject of increasing the number of members of the Committee;

29. *Requests* the Committee to resume its consideration, at its forty-third session, as a matter of priority, of ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session;

30. *Also requests* the Committee to resume its consideration, at its forty-third session, of the item entitled "Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status";

[18] See A/AC.105/715, sect. II.

31. *Requests* the specialized agencies and other international organizations to continue and, where appropriate, enhance their cooperation with the Committee and to provide it with progress reports on their work relating to the peaceful uses of outer space;

32. *Requests* the Committee to continue its work, in accordance with the present resolution, to consider, as appropriate, new projects in outer space activities and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, including its views on which subjects should be studied in the future.

Draft resolution II

Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 51/123 of 13 December 1996, 52/56 of 10 December 1997 and 53/45 of 3 December 1998 concerning the preparations and convening of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held at Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999,

Reaffirming the importance of international cooperation in the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space,

Expressing its satisfaction with the successful preparation of UNISPACE III through the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, as the Preparatory Committee, and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, as the Advisory Committee, as well as the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat as the executive secretariat, and commending their efforts to organize UNISPACE III within existing resources,

Recognizing the contributions of the Technical Forum and the Space Generation Forum to UNISPACE III,

Having considered the report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III)[19] and the recommendations contained in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development",[20]

Stressing the importance of promoting effective means of using space technology to assist in the solution of problems of regional or global significance and of strengthening the capabilities of Member States, in particular developing countries, to use the applications of space research for economic, social and cultural development,

Conscious of the need to expedite the use of space applications by Member States to promote sustainable development and to increase the awareness of the general public with regard to the benefits of space technology,

Desiring to enhance the opportunities for education, training and technical assistance in space science and technology and their applications aimed at the development of indigenous capabilities in all States,

[19] A/CONF.184/6.

[20] Ibid., chap. I, resolution 1.

Expressing its profound gratitude to the Government and people of Austria for the hospitality extended to the participants of UNISPACE III and for the facilities placed at their disposal,

1. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space;[19]

2. *Endorses* the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development";[20]

3. *Urges* Governments, organs, organizations and programmes within the United Nations system as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and industries conducting space-related activities to take the necessary action for the effective implementation of the Vienna Declaration;

4. *Calls upon* all concerned to implement the recommendations made by UNISPACE III as reflected in its report;[19]

5. *Requests* all relevant organizations of the United Nations system to review and, where necessary, adjust their programmes and activities in line with the recommendations of UNISPACE III and to take appropriate measures to ensure their full and effective implementation, taking into account the needs of developing countries, in particular by further enhancing the coordination of their space-related activities through the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities;

6. *Invites* all relevant governing bodies of the organizations within the United Nations system responsible for space-related activities to establish an ad hoc intergovernmental advisory group to review inter-agency coordination of space-related activities with a view to increasing the effectiveness of the work of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities;

7. *Declares* "World Space Week" from 4 to 10 October to celebrate each year at the international level the contributions of space science and technology to the betterment of the human condition, bearing in mind that 4 October 1957 was the date of the launch into outer space of the first human-made Earth satellite, Sputnik I, thus opening the way for space exploration, and that 10 October 1967 was the date of the entry into force of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies;[21]

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to modify the terms of reference of the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 37/90 of 10 December 1982 on the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, to include implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III;

9. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to invite all States to contribute voluntarily to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications and, in his letter of invitation, to identify priority project proposals, on the basis of recommendations of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, and requests the Office for Outer Space Affairs to provide the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space with a report listing those States which have responded to his invitation;

10. *Agrees* that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its secretariat should identify new and innovative funding sources for implementing the recommendations

[21] Resolution 2222 (XXI), annex.

of UNISPACE III in order to supplement the resources to be provided through the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to recommend measures to ensure that the Office for Outer Space Affairs is provided with adequate resources to implement the following actions based on the recommendations of UNISPACE III:

(a) Providing the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space with necessary analytical documents, both on the substance and on the organization of work, to facilitate their consideration of new items called for in the agenda structures adopted by the Committee at its forty-second session;[22]

(b) Organizing, in order to strengthen the partnership of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee with industry, a one-day symposium during the thirty-seventh session of the Subcommittee to provide Member States with updated information on commercially available products, services and ongoing activities of space-related industry;

(c) Identifying and promoting of the use of appropriate space technologies to meet the needs of programmes and organizations within the United Nations system in carrying out activities that have not yet benefited from the use of space technology to enhance their effectiveness and efficiency;

(d) Strengthening the activities of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications to include the following:[23]

(i) Facilitating and supporting the development and implementation of space-related projects that address the operational needs of Member States;

(ii) Providing support to the regional centres for space science and technology education affiliated with the United Nations, including the Network of Space Science and Technology Education and Research Institutions of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe;

(iii) Reorienting the long-term fellowship programme;

(iv) Organizing workshops and conferences on advanced space applications and new system developments for programme managers and leaders of space technology development and applications activities;

(v) Organizing medium-term courses on remote-sensing education for university educators and on telecommunications and tele-health for professionals;

(vi) Providing technical advisory services to Member States, on request, on different aspects of space science and technology and related applications;

(vii) Promoting cooperation in space applications projects between government establishments, universities and research institutions and private industry;

(viii) Organizing an annual public forum to inform the general public of past, ongoing and planned space activities and the future direction of such activities;

(ix) Promoting activities for youth, so as to encourage interest among students and young scientists and engineers;

(x) Promoting cooperation in the development of educational programmes in space science and technology for primary and secondary school curricula;

---

[22] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/54/20), annex I.

[23] See A/CONF.184/6, chap. II, para. 409 (d) (i)-(xii).

(xi) Establishing a programme of visits by astronauts, cosmonauts and other space scientists and engineers to increase knowledge about space-related activities, in particular among young people;

(xii) Promoting the participation of scientists from developing countries in space science and planetary exploration;

(xiii) Initiating programmes to promote the use of satellite communications and Earth observation data for disaster management and to provide opportunities for professionals to put into practice the knowledge that they have acquired through training courses;

12. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to ensure the availability of the report of UNISPACE III, including its proceedings, and to disseminate as widely as possible the results of UNISPACE III, in particular the Vienna Declaration and the summary of the background and recommendations of UNISPACE III;

13. *Notes* that, in response to a request made by the Preparatory Committee for UNISPACE III at its 1999 session, the executive secretariat has prepared for submission to the General Assembly a document on organizational matters relating to UNISPACE III, with the aim of providing other entities in the United Nations system with guidelines on using existing resources to organize a conference on global issues;

14. *Agrees* that the document prepared by the executive secretariat on organizational matters relating to UNISPACE III should be issued as a report to the General Assembly during its fifty-fourth session;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III;

16. *Decides* to review and appraise, at its fifty-ninth session, the implementation of the outcome of UNISPACE III and to consider further actions and initiatives, and, in this context, requests the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session recommendations for consideration by the Assembly on the format, scope and organizational aspects of that review by the Assembly.